

A LOOK INSIDE DEVELOPING EARLY PHONIC SKILLS FOR ESL PRESCHOOLERS
THAT LEADS TO BECOMING SUCCESSFUL IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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Abstract

Reading is a key principle in the language learning process for English Language Learners. This language skill is a complex strategy that takes careful planning and activities for ESL preschoolers to achieve. ESL preschoolers develop reading and phonic skills through daily reading aloud. A popular way preschoolers interact with reading daily is through the activity circle time. Circle time is essential for language and confidence building (Mosley, 2005). This method is useful for language learners because it allows them early access to vocabulary and illustrations of phonic words, that they may be unfamiliar with. Early reading development is linked to their academic success and increases their future endeavors in becoming successful in learning English. Preschool is a critical time for English language learners. ESL preschoolers rely heavily on sensory activities that contribute to their cognitive brain development. A popular sensory activity that relates to cognitive development is painting with their hands or fingers. ESL preschoolers enhance their cognitive skills through pretend play (Seifert, 2004). Pretend play gives ESL preschoolers the opportunity to communicate with others and practice what they have learned through circle time.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents who have been my support and inspiration to pursue my dreams despite all the challenges I faced. I also dedicate my thesis to my fiancé who pushed me to finish my project and gave me endless support.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Michelle Plaisance for her wonderful assistance in ensuring I finished my thesis project strong. She helped me along each step of the way! She helped me stay positive and optimistic even when faced with all my challenges this semester. She was my advisor throughout my thesis project and has assisted me throughout my graduation studies. For her, I am truly thankful for her time and dedication.

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Chapter One: Introduction

I currently work at a preschool in the southeastern United States and have been working with younger students ages 3-4 for a year now. Before I became a full-time instructor, I was a part time tutor at Sylvan Learning Center. During my experience, I noticed that culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) preschool and kindergarten students struggled with reading and speaking skills. I also noticed that students who dislike reading often face challenges building strong phonemic awareness. At my preschool, we encourage parents to read daily to their children.

If educators want to support successful ESL students, they must be able to understand, read, and speak English. These skills build off each other and students cannot succeed without all of them. This thesis project explores how building strong phonic and reading skills allows ESL preschoolers to succeed in learning English. In order to build these skills, educators must allow students time to practice the pronunciation of tricky phonic sounds in group discussions, ensure parents are reading daily to their children, and build confidence within the classroom to create successful language learners.

During my time in the classroom, I have noticed that children whose parents spent time reading with them have stronger voices during circle time. Circle time is essential because it allows students to practice speaking vocabulary words and to learn essential knowledge that is required for kindergarten. With ESL students, children often cannot read or were not read to in English. Experts argued, “the importance of success in reading for lifelong achievement must not be underestimated; how well a child learns to read may determine future opportunities, including not only career possibilities, but also his or her ability to accomplish the basic activities of daily

life” (Khan & Khan 2021, p 174). Therefore, it is important for ESL students to develop strong reading skills because these skills will affect their academic success and confidence in adulthood.

If ESL students lack reading skills their will likely be a decrease in their phonemic awareness. During circle time, my students listen to the read-aloud daily and can understand new vocabulary words introduced. They will hear new words every single day and this will help develop their phonic skills. When ESL students increase their vocabulary, it will allow them to feel more confident in speaking English. They will not stammer or stutter when reading aloud or speaking to their friends in class. Preschool ESL students are learning how to converse for the first time outside of their own households. It is critical that these students develop reading and speaking skill, because without them they will have a difficult time academically.

When ESL preschoolers build reading skills it increases their reading comprehension. This knowledge is essential for the rest of their academic lives. The level of language learning each student experiences must continually be evaluated to see if additional tutoring is needed. This metric is linked to phonetic awareness because it “is thought to contribute to helping children learn to read because the structure of the English writing system is alphabetic” (Nunes, Willows, Schuster, Yaghoubzadeh & Shanahan 2001, p 254). Once ESL preschoolers learn the alphabetic structure of English, enabled by reading, it will build phonic skills. This will instill confidence during circle and group discussions because ESL students will understand the material.

This thesis project includes a hands-on workshop for students and parents. The goal of this workshop is to make these phonic and reading skills become second nature. This workshop will last for three days and allow parents to develop at-home skills to help their children become successful in learning English. This workshop consists of mix and matching games, reading

aloud in character costumes, singing/dancing games to help with tricky words, arts, and crafts to help students understand vocabulary words, and sensory activities to cement these skills in their long-term memories; the activities should be utilized for three hours each day. I provide tips and tricks to make families' lives easier while simultaneously helping their children learn English. This workshop revolves around reading passages that preschoolers struggle understanding and vocabulary words that have tricky phonic sounds. This will show parents the best way to help their children learn when they are struggling with building these skills in the future.

During the workshop, I provide on providing tips on how to create confident speakers in the classroom. This research and more will demonstrate how crucial it is that preschoolers build phonic skills as this will lead them to strong reading comprehension skills, especially when these ESL students take assessments. When ESL students are given the opportunity to practice pronunciation of new vocabulary words, they will become successful in learning English. This thesis will focus on this topic and demonstrate how critical it is for preschoolers to develop their skills for their future academic careers.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The importance of reading to ESL preschool students is linked to their academic success. ESL preschoolers who are read to daily have success in their phonemic awareness, pronunciation of tricky words, and learn English faster (Talbot, 2020). It is vital for parents to read to their ESL preschooler because it will increase their likelihood in becoming fluent in English. This thesis project will discuss the significance of reading to ESL preschoolers in the classroom and at home- and how developing reading and speaking skills is linked to academic success.

The Importance of Reading

Alyousef (2006) notes that, “reading can be seen as an ‘interactive’ process between a reader and a text which leads to automaticity or (read fluency)” (p. 3). Educators need this interactive process to create the foundation that allows reading in the classroom. If ESL preschoolers have time to practice their fluency, they will excel in speaking English. Omar and Saufi (2015) said that “the primary reasons to recommend reading stories in the ESL classroom is that not only are the stories motivating and extremely interesting, but they can attract listeners as well as promote interaction” (p. 3). If ESL preschoolers feel interested in the read aloud, it will build their reading and speaking skills. Collins (2005) mentioned that “influences on early vocabulary development include a range of experiences, such as story reading, involvement in conversations, and exposure to novel words: (p. 407). Early vocabulary exposure is important because without these experiences, ESL preschoolers will not advance academically.

Brice and Brice (2009) mentioned that “phonics is the graph phonemic connection, which is systematic and predictable relationship that exists between written letter and spoken sounds”

(p. 209). ESL preschoolers build connections by understanding the written letter and the spoken sounds of terminology. Reading daily ensures that they will have a chance to focus on words that sound unfamiliar. Phonemic awareness is difficult for ESL preschoolers to achieve and master, but with the help of instructors it is not impossible. ESL preschoolers become more aware of phonetic sounds when they are read to as a child (Talbot, 2020). Without this interaction, they will not build phonemic awareness and may subsequently struggle with academic success (Talbot, 2020).

Lesaux and Siegel (2014) noted that, “like phonological awareness syntactic awareness is a skill that is related to beginning of read achievement” (p. 1085). ESL preschoolers will have phonological awareness when instructors incorporate syntactic exercises. Kalb and Ours (2013) mentioned that “we find that parents can play an important role in the development of reading skills and cognitive skills of their children by reading to them at a young age” (p. 24). Cognitive and reading skills proves that children thrive academically when they are read to. Bowman and Treiman (2004) mentioned, “during the logographic phase of reading development, every new word is a new visual configuration that requires independent processing in order to form a rudimentary representation” (p. 3). It creates independent language learners who have visual aids to remember tricky words.

Reading to ESL preschoolers will develop their enchantment in literacy. Hodges (2010) noted that, “in classrooms where teachers seek to encourage individual students’ reading of texts and increase their power as critical readers of literature, such an invitation is welcome” (p. 63). ESL preschoolers who have prompt access to reading will develop stronger skills as an adult. One of these skills for academic success is literacy, which is built off confident readers.

Reading at a youthful age is significant because it builds fluency skills. Chard, Vaughn, and Tyler stated (2002), “if a reader has not developed fluency, the process of decoding words drains attention, and insufficient attention is available for constructing the meaning of words” (p. 400). This will result in complications with speech and language growth. Fluency is important when it comes to reading because ESL preschoolers read daily. Without fluency, ESL preschoolers will not be able to construct the meaning of words and thus, creates complications in the learning process.

Reading is important for building oral language growth in ESL preschoolers. Whorrak and Cabell (2016) mentioned that oral language development “has an effect on reading achievement during both the early stages of learning to decode words and the later stages of reading when focus is on comprehension” (p. 2). Reading achievement at an early age is important because ESL preschoolers who develop early childhood reading skills excel at speaking English. Their oral language develops faster because they have more experience with hearing words. Honig (2007) continued with, “rich oral language opportunities are critical for children not only to enlarge vocabular, but also to learn the myriad morphemes requisite in specific situations to modify words that children know” (p. 588). Oral language opportunities create reading comprehension because they will practice speaking English.

Building reading skills happens outside the classroom, as well. It is significant parents spend time reading daily to their child. Vezzoli, Kalantari, Kucirkova, and Vasalou (2020) noted that, “the parents in our study [recognized] the value shared reading in promoting children’s reading skills and wider knowledge. This prompted them to engage in practices that scaffolded their child’s learning” (p. 7). This assertion further proves how reading shapes an ESL preschooler lives academically. It starts at home with their parents and turns into bonding that

stays in in their long-term memories. The ultimate way to create success language learners is through teachers and peers. It is vital that teachers read aloud to their ESL preschoolers daily. Ebert, Lockl, Weinert, Anders, Kluczmiok, and Rossback (2013) explained, “future work addressing the relative impact of preschool quality on children’s language development should also include more specific measures of language input provided by preschool teachers and peers” (p. 19). It is critical that educators are preparing ESL preschoolers for the future.

Dickinson, Griffith, Golinkoff, and Hirsh-Pasek (2012) mentioned, “book reading helps children learn language because it requires the participants to be active and engage in responsive interactions about word meanings” (p. 6). When ESL preschoolers are interactive during reading time it builds their language development. They will remember the words in the books associated with harder concepts. Dickinson, Griffith, Golinkoff, and Hirsh-Pasek (2012) continued “one observational study found that children in households where reading was reported with children as young as eight months had stronger early language growth” (p. 8-9). Fundamental development proves that reading allows the brain first access to language growth. Children whose parents read to them at an early age will have stronger language skills as they grow up.

Learning a language at a youthful age is already challenging, but educators can use reading to help ESL preschool students build proficiency. Berzah, Katz and Levy (2018) stated, “we present a novel approach for automated assessment of language proficiency which relies on eye movements during reading” (p. 8). Eye movements proves that during reading ESL preschoolers are looking at the book. ESL preschoolers will not be able to learn if their eyes are not on the book. Eye movements while reading are skills built at childhood when the parents read to them daily.

Geva and Farnia (2012) noted, “to comprehend spoken discourse in the upper elementary comes a large contribution of these language components to reading comprehension” (p. 1842). Large components in relations to reading comprehension shows the significance of these reading, speaking, and listening skills discussed previously. Cartwright (2012) also noted, “children who are better able to process flexibly sounds and meanings of words have more success in the development of reading comprehension” (p. 34). ESL preschoolers processing the meaning of words further proves that early access to flexibility in reading skills leads to less difficulties with sound and word meanings. This is critical for academic success because the goal is to create independent and confident language learners.

Wasik and Bond (2001) noted, “children whose teachers provided multiple opportunities to interact with vocabulary words learned more book-related vocabulary compared with children who were exposed to just the book” (p. 5). Multiple opportunities shows that children have success in language development when they are exposed to book related vocabulary. Wasik and Bond (2001) added, “through the interactive book reading, the teachers introduced vocabulary in a meaningful way” (p. 5). Learning vocabulary in a meaningful way will stay with ESL preschoolers long-term. ESL preschoolers need book related vocabulary because that terminology will be needed for their future academic careers.

Cognitive Behaviors with Reading

Cartwright (2012) noted that, “that children’s cognitive flexibility assessed with theory-of-mind tasks, was related to their rhyming ability, which contributes to later reading skill” (p. 28). Children’s cognitive skills grow through their rhyming abilities which is learned by reading. Sethuraman and Radhakrishnan (2020) noted that, “cognitive strategies enable the learners to manipulate the language material in direct ways, i.e., through reasoning, analysis, note-taking,

summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, recognizing information to develop strong schemas, knowledge structure, practicing in naturalistic settings,” (p. 118). Cognitive strategies at an early age gains access to these skills that Sethuraman and Radhakrishnan mentioned. This implies that, “cognitive strategy use influences students’ writing skill with reference to planning, goal-setting, retrieving and transferring information, eliciting new ideas, comparing and relating the ideas in relevance to the topic provided, and systematizing and compiling ideas” (Sethuraman & Radhakrishnan, 2020, p. 118). These scholars show activities to incorporate in the classroom to gain cognitive skills. Without these skills, students would not be able to develop reading skills (Cartwright 2012).

ESL preschoolers advance cognitive skills by pretending to play (Seifert 2004). Pretend play stimulates the mind and allows ESL preschoolers to think on their own (Seifert 2004). It allows ESL preschoolers time to study what they are doing and what they want to do. Lillard, Pinkham, and Smith (2011) noted that, “it involves a remarkable cognitive feat: the child’s mind purposely thwarts reality, making things other than they are, at an age when the child is just learning what reality is” (p. 302). Pretend play shows educators what ESL preschoolers consider their reality.

Weisberg (2015) noted that, “for instance, children vary in their inclinations to engage in pretend play, and these differences may predict differences in their levels of other skills” (p. 2512). Pretend play shows educators how advanced they are in other levels of skills. Pretend play is linked to the theory of the mind (Weisberg 2015). Weisberg (2015) mentioned, “recent work has found that a preference for engagement with fantasy scenarios predicts improvements in preschoolers’ theory of mind abilities over a 7-month period” (p. 253). Weisberg continued with, “a small body of literature has found that children perform better on false-belief tasks when

they are either couched in term of fictional story or acted out with pretend objects rather than physical toys” (p. 253). ESL preschoolers thrive off pretend play because it allows their brain to act out scenarios. Pretend play is vital for building cognitive skills because it shows reality versus fictional.

The Importance of Circle Time

Circle time in a preschooler’s life is essential for academic success. Circle time consists of many activities but reading picture books and stories is the main event. Circle time is a time where students sit in a circle around the educator and take part in story time. When educators read aloud during circle time, it builds ESL preschoolers’ vocabularies (Brown, 2021). Circle time leads ESL preschoolers to build reading, speaking, and listening skills (Children Central, 2018). These skills will further help them in their endeavors of mastering their academic success.

Mosley (2005) continued with, “circle time also facilitates language development, confidence building, and the five vital skills of looking, listening, speaking, thinking and concentrating” (p. 8). Without this firsthand approach, ESL preschoolers would not have prompt access to reading and speaking skills. When children are read aloud to it strengthens their brain that is linked with word meaning and reading comprehension (Kris, 2022). They will remember the story that is associated with the vocabulary word and that forms a link in their brains (Kris, 2022). During circle time, the books hold new vocabulary words and pictures. Remembering pictures is vital for their academic success because without a way for students to see the words they will not build grammatical understanding of new vocabulary (Frey, 2015).

Massaro (2017) noted that, “the language and content of prototypical picture books are more extensive in vocabulary, grammar, and content and therefore more cognitively challenging

than their counterparts in prototypical spoken language” (p. 70). When ESL preschoolers can attach sound and word meaning to pictures it will linger in their long-term memories Armstrong (2011) mention that “even when someone reads a text aloud to you, only you can experience its meaning for yourself” (p. 105). Circle time will resonate with ESL preschoolers because each experience books/pictures differently.

Brodi and Renblad (2020) continued by explaining that preschool instructors can read different genres aloud to help with language development. They mentioned, “the staff used different kind of books: fairy tales, rhymes and jingles, fact books, song books, read-life books, picture books,” and, “children’s interest in signs, symbols, pictures and letters have developed, and their vocabulary, understanding of language and concepts had been widened” (Brodin & Renblad, 2020, p. 2209-2210). Children’s interest is impactful because the number of books that can be read during circle time is endless. The pressure for one genre for language development is not on the educators’ shoulders. ESL preschoolers struggle with reading comprehension due to the lack of reading aloud time. Bergen, Snowling, Zeeuw, Beijsterveldt, Dolan and Boomsma (2018) notes that, “that children’s reading level fuels how much they choose to read it follows, as practitioners know, that children tend to avoid reading if they find it difficult” (p. 8). This is where circle time becomes essential in reading development for ESL preschoolers. Circle time gives them a chance to get used to reading daily and it does not become challenging. They will find they want to read more on their own and they will not avoid the subject.

Welsh, Nix, Blair, Bierman and Nelson (2010) noted that, “emergent literacy during the preschool period, including the ability to manipulate phonemes and to recognize letters and letter sounds, predicts later reading achievement” (p. 4). During circle time, ESL preschoolers recognize letters, sound, and understand phonemes. When learning a language, it is important

that ESL preschoolers practice speaking the language that they spent months listening to and reading. Pullen and Justice (2003) mentioned, “two approaches identified in the language intervention literature that may be particularly useful for enhancing preschool children’s oral language performance are stimulation and interactive storybook reading” (p. 9). This further shows how significantly important circle time is for building ESL preschoolers into strong language proficient adults.

Glazzard (2016) mentioned, “it is rooted in the notion that each individual has worth, individuality and the right to control their own direction” (p. 3). Glazzard present a theory in his article that demonstrates why circle time is significant for ESL preschoolers’ development. One reason is that it creates individuality and allows ESL preschoolers to examine their own worth. Glazzard (2016) continued with, “circle time creates an emotionally ‘safe’ place for pupils to explore what they think and feel” (p. 3). Circle time is essential because it develops a safe and comforting environment for ESL preschoolers. They will be able to ask questions and feel safe around their instructor. Glazzard noted, “it has been argued that circle time should be a part of pupils’ entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum, given its potential for enhancing pupils’ self-esteem” (p. 3). Circle time builds ESL preschoolers self-esteem and ability to ask questions. Thus, “these skills can help pupils to work together in groups better, thus leading to improvements across curriculum” (Glazzard, 2016, p. 14). Circle time enhances ESL preschoolers’ development because it allows them to work better as a team and allow confidence in the classroom.

Conclusion

In conclusion, ESL preschoolers rely on circle time, educators, and parental guidance to achieve academic success. ESL preschoolers must read in the classroom and at home to build

skills they need for academic success. Parents must read aloud at home daily to ensure these skills that are being built in the classroom stay long-term. The goal for educators is to create students with strong developing language ability and skills. Educators need to strive to create successful, confident, and independent language learners. To achieve this mission educators must incorporate reading at the early childhood age.

Chapter Three: Project Design

In this chapter, I explain the reason behind creating a workshop for the families and teachers of ESL preschoolers to develop phonic skills. This workshop will assist teachers and parents to find ways to create success in areas of development such as, phonics, listening, reading, vocabulary, and fluency.

For example, teaching phonics “is aimed at developing the correspondences between these sounds and the spelling patterns (graphemes) that represent them” (Daud & Salamah, 2016, p. 392). Educators “should include clear definitions of each phoneme, should show how phonemes are used in spoken language, and how each phoneme differs” (Daud & Salamah, 2016, p. 333). Daud and Salamah demonstrated how educators should address phonemic awareness in the classroom. This workshop will consist of activities on phonic sounds patterns and explaining to ESL preschoolers how words differ.

This workshop includes reading aloud activities because, “a systematic method of reading aloud, allowed teachers to scaffold children’s understanding of the book being read, model strategies for making inferences and explanations, and teach vocabulary and concepts” (McGee & Schickedanz, 2007, p. 1). McGee and Schickedanz (2007) continue with, “using interactive read-alouds, teachers point to details in illustrations and ask questions about vocabulary words as they read. They extend children’s responses by asking them to clarify and explain” (p. 3). Reading aloud is vital for language development because ESL preschoolers can see illustrations and hear new vocabulary words. This workshop allows parents to read-aloud to their child and gain interaction with and awareness of how much their child is learning.

Plaza and Cohen (2007) noted, “in order to learn to read and spell, children rely on a visual discipline (left-to-right scanning, fine grained visual analysis, visual-spatial organization) to master the optimal viewing effect in word recognition that allows the reader to identify most letters in the word” (p. 73). They continued with, “there is a preparedness continuum: being attentive to the selective features of visual stimuli makes for more rapid and more efficient mastery of reading skills” (p. 73). Visual representation stimulates the brain and allows ESL preschoolers to master their reading skills. This workshop relies heavily on visual aids to help ensure ESL preschoolers develop reading and writing skills. Thus, this visual scaffolding will help them with early development and not have poor reading and writing skills (Plaza & Cohen, 2007 p. 74).

Listening “is the receptive use of language, and since the goal is to make sense of the speech, the focus is on meaning rather than language” (Sevik, 2012, p. 10-11). Sevik (2012) added with, “children have a keen awareness of rhythm, and they have not yet experienced anxiety that accompany learning a second language. Therefore, songs are considered to be a *sine qua non* of teaching ESL” (p. 11). This workshop consists of creating song/dance activities to help develop listening skills. ESL preschoolers will be able to listen to the rhythm and new sounds. Songs are a great language development tool because “the affinity with music makes songs vital tools to create a safe and natural classroom ethos and to overcome feelings of shyness and hesitation of the part of the learners” (Sevik, 2012, p. 11). This positive affinity with music will help parents connect with their child during the workshop. ESL preschoolers and their parents will connect with overcoming shyness and how to have fun while learning.

This workshop includes vocabulary activities to further strength their language development. Alshahrani (2019) mentioned, “a student’s understanding of a vocabulary word’s

meaning and usage (depth) can vary from shallow (merely recognizing a word and/or using that word in a basic way) to deep use (ability to use the word in a multitude of contexts)” (p. 66).

Alshahrani (2019) also argued, “if a child is able to spell, recognize, and use a word in the proper format written verbally, then the child has mastered that word” (p. 66). ESL preschoolers need to master new terminology to understand English fluently. Alshahrani (2019) noted, “in order to help students build their vocabulary skills, researchers have used a variety of strategies including direct reading instruction strategies, storybook reading strategies, and memorization strategies” (p. 70). This workshop includes storybook reading through parent and child, and memorization games to help build ESL preschoolers vocabulary skills.

In conclusion, this workshop consists of strategies and activities to further advance ESL preschoolers’ literacy skills. Song/dance games create comfortable learners and demonstrates that learning is exciting. Storybook reading and memorization help ensure these words and sentences stay in the ESL preschoolers’ long-term memories. Reading aloud allows ESL preschoolers to hear new vocabulary words and have illustrations for what these words mean. This workshop thrives off creating successful ESL preschoolers by developing their reading, writing, speaking, and phonic skills. With an early head start, ESL preschoolers will gain a smoother transition to kindergarten and 1st grade.

Chapter Four: The Project

This workshop was created to provide strategies for families and teachers of ESL preschoolers to develop early phonic skills. This workshop will assist educators and parents in finding ways to help ESL preschoolers develop skills in phonics, listening, reading, vocabulary, and fluency.

To help guide the parents throughout the activities and centers of the workshop, they must follow a PowerPoint Presentation. The following figures demonstrate what day one of the workshop entails.

| a | a_e | ai |
|---|---|--|
| ay | eigh | rain |
|  hay |  game |  acorn |
|  eight |  skate |  paint |
|  chain |  alien |  pay |
|  neigh |  maid |  stay |
|  apron |  gate |  sleigh |
|  play |  baby |  bake |
|  shake |  tail |  say |
|  clay |  weigh |  frame |

Phonic Patterns

- This center will help parents practice different phonic sounds with their child.
- They will be given flash cards that match figure 1 on the left.
- Parents will take time going over the different sounds and how they are similar/different.
- Parents will take time to go over different phonic sounds in words.

Figure 1

Figure 1 demonstrates how educators and parents teach phonics to the ESL preschoolers. This is an early developmental skill that is beneficial for ESL preschoolers for obtain. The goal is for ESL preschoolers to be able to identify the different sound patterns. For this activity, parents will be sitting across from their child. The picture in Figure 1 will be transformed into flash cards. The first run through the flash cards will be identifying pictures. As the parents acknowledge that their child knows the pictures it is their turn to go over phonic sounds and

patterns. Educators will be circling around the different centers helping with trickier sounds and overall confidence building. Educators will be given a sheet with all the pictures and sounds that are presented in the flashcards. Educators will be reading the pictures and flashcards with the parents to ensure they understand what to look for.

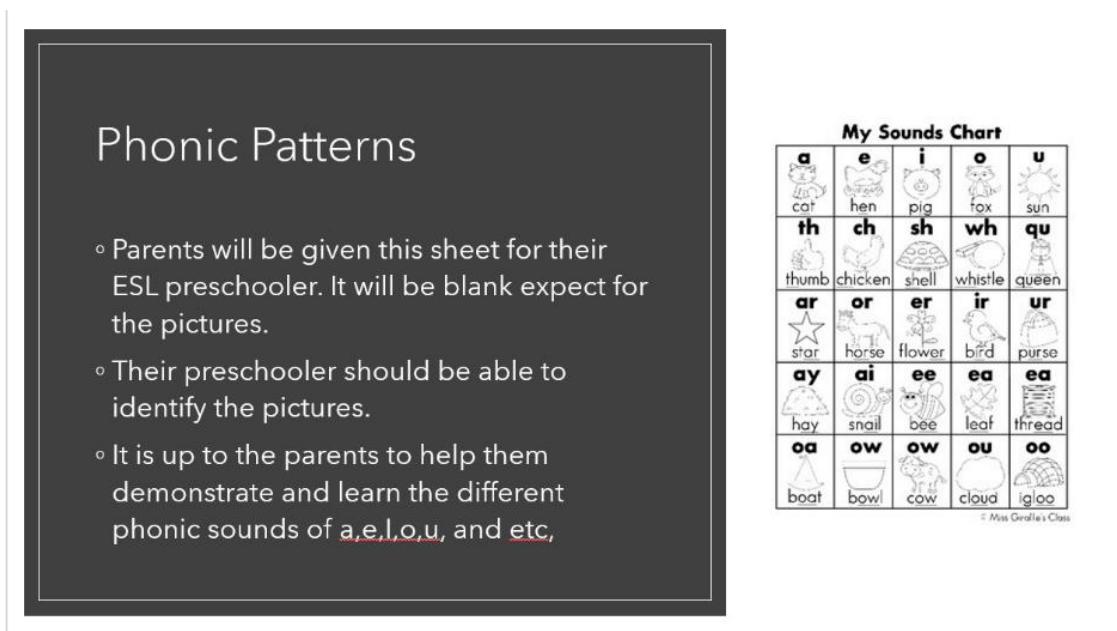


Figure 2

After thirty minutes or so, educators will round up all the packs of flash cards. Parents and students will be allowed to take a small five-minute break while the next activity is being passed out. Figure 2 contains the worksheet that each parent will receive. The only difference is the phonic sounds and names of the pictures will be blank. The parents and ESL preschool will work together to determine what each picture is. Parents will receive an answer key to help them if need be. Worksheets are acceptable for ESL preschoolers as long as parents are constantly engaging with their child. ESL preschoolers are not required to fill out the worksheet on their own and the parents can fill it out with them.

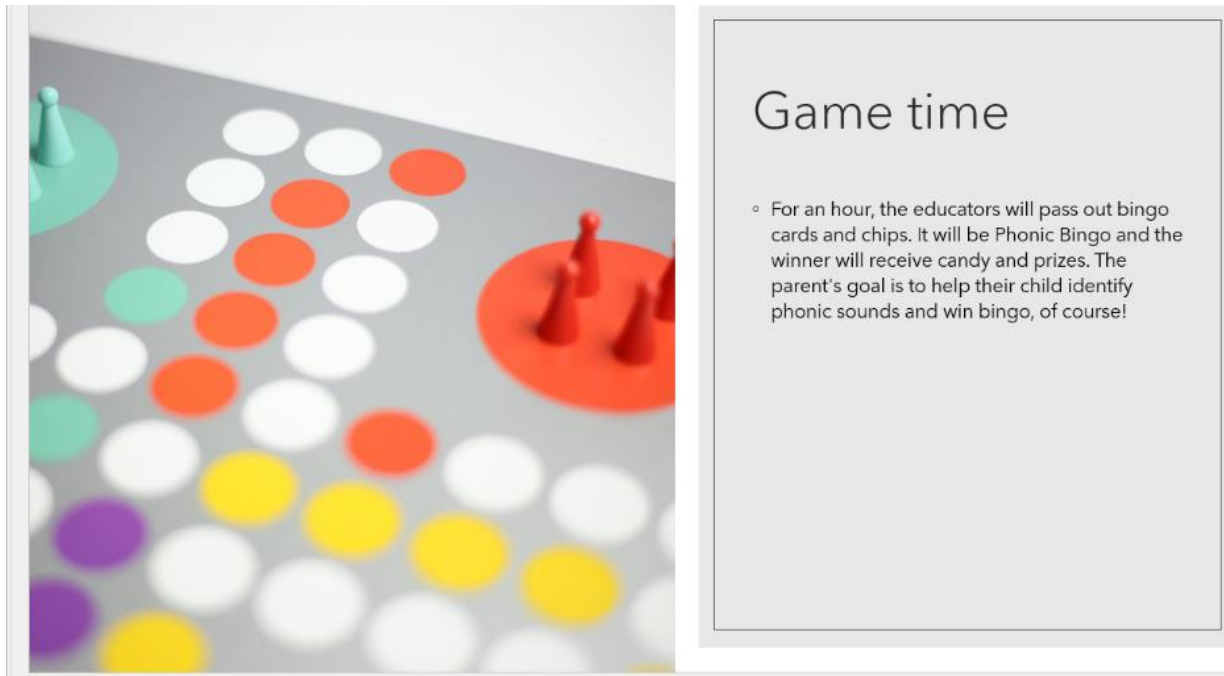


Figure 3

After an hour of practicing phonic sounds and patterns with their child it is game time. The game for day one in the workshop is phonics bingo. The bingo cards are similar to the worksheet and flash cards used earlier in the lesson. The first hour of this workshop is a guided practice between the educator, parents, and ESL preschoolers. It is now time for their practice to be put to the test with independent work. The parent's job is to make sure they are placing their bingo chips on the sounds they hear for certain words. The ESL preschoolers and their parents are the ones playing bingo. ESL preschoolers can play bingo, but the parents are there to make sure they put the bingo chips in the correct spot. For instance, in the word "BEE" the EE sound is found in this word. ESL preschoolers would pick up a bingo chip and the parents would help guide them to the correct picture.

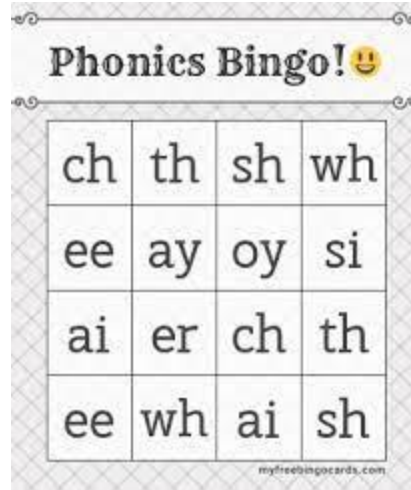


Figure 4

Figure 4 is one of the many phonic bingo cards.

Day one of the workshop will end with a reading aloud activity. The educator invites all the parents and students gather into a circle (to the best of their ability). The educator then allows the ESL preschoolers to pick out one of three books they would like to hear. A good pick would be “The Grouchy Ladybug” by Eric Carle. This book has a lot of potential with different character voices and acting out what is happening in the story. Once the read aloud is over the educator will demonstrate how to ask children questions after the story is finished. Parents need to pay attention to how the educator is reading the story because they will have their very own circle time with their child in the next two days.

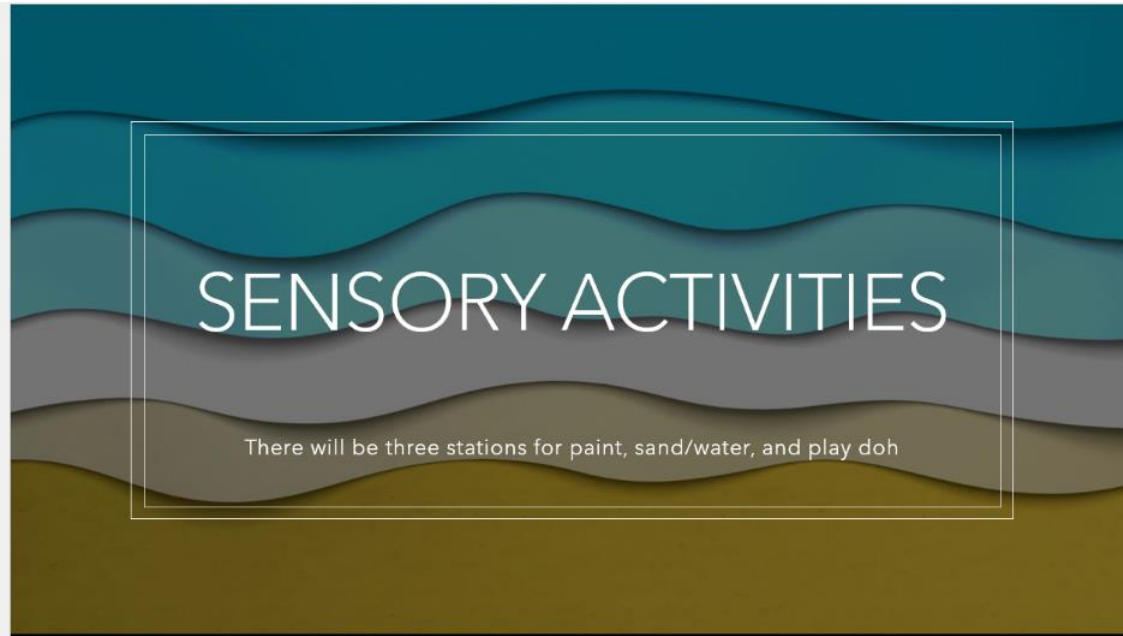


Figure 5

Day two of the workshop focuses on sensory activities. The last hour of this segment of the workshop will focus on parents and ESL preschoolers dressing up and reading in character voices. There will be three stations for painting, sand/water, and play doh sensory activities. The supplies will include various colors of paint and Playdoh, sand, kinetic sand, and water. There will be sand and water toys such as boats and sand castle items. With the Playdoh station, there will be Playdoh toys and containers to help the ESL preschoolers and their parents make pretend food. The procedures will be about thirty to forty minutes at each station. They will attempt to recreate the pictures that are on the tables and the list of instructions to follow. Each parent will be given an instruction card that lists what to do. For instance, at the paint station ESL preschoolers and their parents will follow the instructions to make their own handprint butterflies. The desired learning outcomes include: learning through exploration of different textures, learning through creativity and imagination by making different objects at each table, learning through curiosity of what all these textures feel like, and lastly define their motor skills.

The instruction card will have a list of vocabulary words and definitions for the parents to go over with their child.

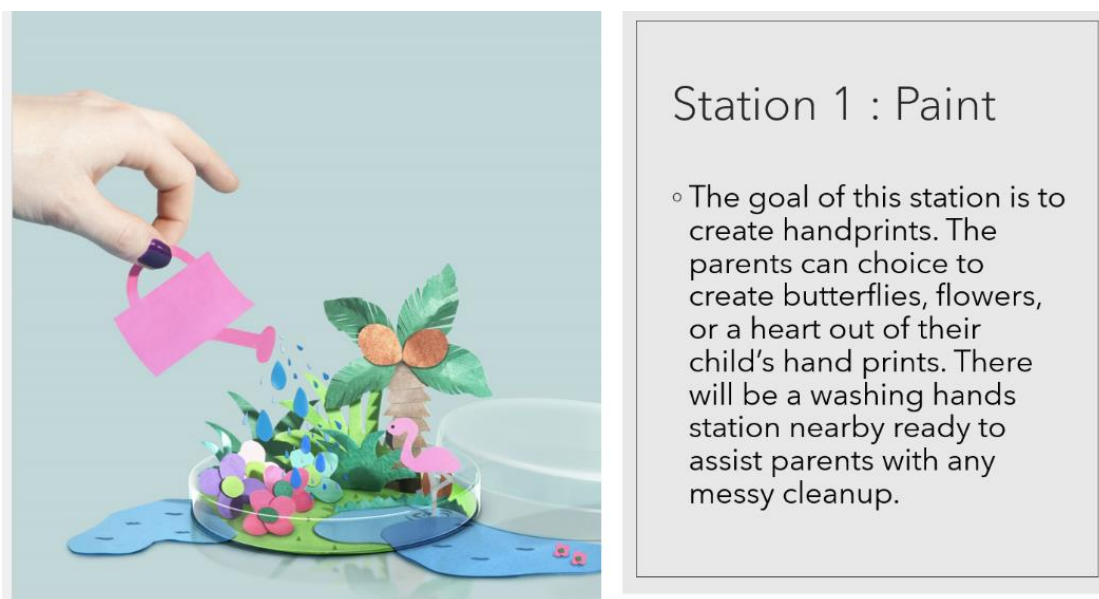


Figure 6

There are three stations during this portion of the agenda. Parents will rotate with their child, spending thirty minutes at each station. . At the first station the parent is going to help their child explore sensory activities. The parents will be given an instruction card with a list of questions. Some of these questions can include, “Is the paint hot or cold?” “Does the paint feel weird?” “What does it feel like going against the paper?” The learning outcome will be included on the instruction card as well. The learning outcome will be learning through curiosity and exploration of different textures. Some of the new vocabulary that can be introduced includes, butterfly, flower, daisies, springtime, painting, leaves and wings. The educators will be coming around making sure active conversation is present and if parents have questions about their instruction cards.



Figures 7 and 8. Station 1 Instructions for Parents

These are the two examples that will be at the station for the parents to use. The parents can use whatever color paint they want and help their ESL preschooler make these sensory crafts with paint.



Figure 9

This station will create the most imagination and sensory play. Each parent will receive a plastic bin that can hold both water and sand. The goal is for the parent and ESL preschoolers to create a large sandcastle with water around it. The ESL preschooler will have the choice between kinetic sand or regular sand. They will be able to determine how much water they want to mix with their sand. At the tables, there will be an instruction card with the learning outcomes of learning through exploration of textures and creativity of what the child can make. The instruction card will have a picture of what their child's sandcastle could look like. Some vocabulary includes sandcastle, sand, water, boat, kinetic sand, and texture. The card will include the following questions for parents, "what does the sand feel like?" "What does the sand feel like with water added to it?" "Is the sand mushy or stiff?" "How big do you want your castle to be?" "How are we going to make this castle?" Educators will be circling around to ensure parents have no questions about their instruction cards.



Figure 10

Figure 10 is a wonderful example of what the parents and ESL preschoolers will be receiving in station 2. The station will be filled with different toys that the parents can use if sandcastle building gets tiring. If the child decides to play with water or sand toys, parents need to ask questions about what they are making, and this toy affects the sand/water.



Station 3: Playdoh Food

- The goal of this station is to help parents and ESL preschoolers use playdoh to make all different types of food. They can make pizza, cupcakes, sandwiches, whatever they want to make.
- Make sure the parents are asking questions regarding how the playdoh feels, smells, and how it develops their sensory development.

Figure 11

This is another station that has a goal and abundance of imagination available. This station consists of all kinds of Playdoh and tools to create various types of food. There will be an instruction card at the tables and the following figures of what the child and parents can make. The parents should be inspired by their favorite foods and compare their Playdoh miniature food to what real food looks like. The instruction card will include these questions for the parents to ask their ESL preschooler. “What do you think this food would taste like?” “What flavor have you created?” “Is this how big the real (insert food item) is?” “What does the Playdoh feel like in your hands?” The vocabulary that will be included on the card will be pretend, flavor, huge, small, taste, salty, sweet, and feel. The learning outcomes will be exploration with different food types and imagining what the food smells/taste like.



Figure 12

This is an example of what the cupcakes could look like in station 3.



Figure 13

This is another example of what pizza could look like in station 3 with the playdoh. After all, three stations have been visited and completed by families they will be allowed a break. The last hour will be devoted to dressing up in character costumes and reading aloud in different voices.



Figure 14

Figure 14 is a demonstration of what the dress up station will look like for the families. It is the parent's job to pick the outfits that correspond with the book they were assigned by the educators present. For instance, if the family was given "Caps for Sale" by Esphyr Slobodkina then someone needs to dress up as the man and the monkeys. Whoever is the man will act out as he does and whoever is the monkey will have to act as them. The families read the story first and then act out what the book is saying/doing. There are millions of ways for this to be achieved and the educators present will help make sure the acting is done smoothly.



Figure 15

Figure 15 is another example of what the children can look like for the character dress up. The educators present will take lots of photos and make sure that families are participating in the character voices and acting out the parts. Once the reading aloud is finished, it is up to the educators to go around to each family to see what words or phrases stood out to the ESL preschoolers. This is a great exercise for building vocabulary skills.

Workshop day three will consist of singing and dancing games. The reading aloud will focus on building vocabulary that ESL preschoolers need to achieve.

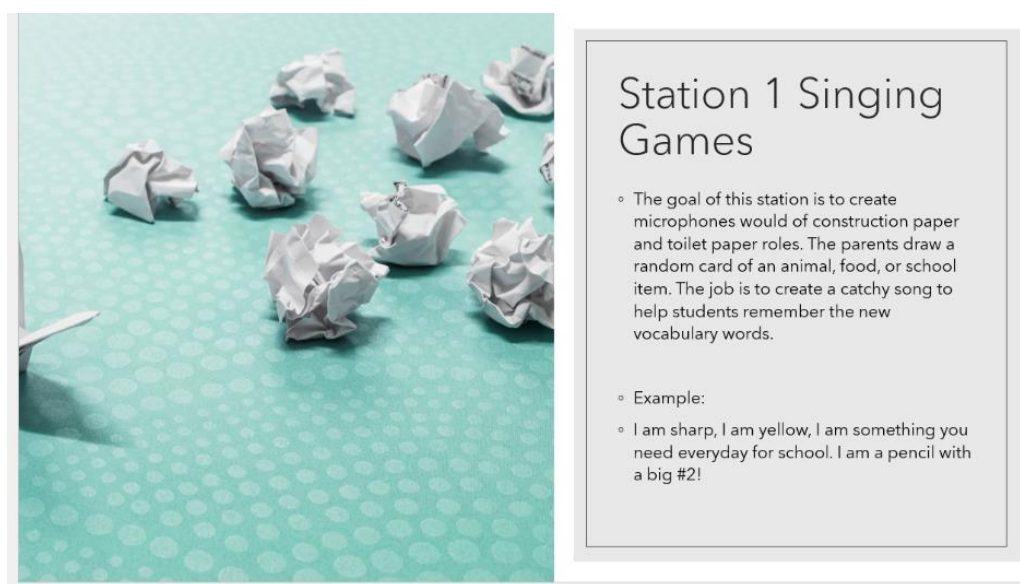


Figure 16

Station, one consists of a singing game where parents and families will be able to make songs up to anything. The parents will be given a random beat and draw the topic of the song out of a hat. The goal of this activity is to have fun and create a catchy song to help their ESL preschoolers remember new vocabulary words. The example was a song created for remembering what a pencil looks like and its function for school. For some ESL preschoolers, the use of a pencil may be new, and this would be a newer vocabulary for them. The only way

for these vocabulary words to stick to their long-term memories is to incorporate them with something catchy/memorable.



Figure 17

Figure 17 represents what the microphones that the families will make could look like. The goal of creating a microphone is to make the songs more memorable and allow the ESL preschoolers to become excited for this activity.



Figure 18

Figure 18 demonstrates how the families will be standing in front of one another with their microphones after creating their songs. It is up to the educators present to go around to each

family and listen to the songs that they have created. This activity is great for family bonding and putting two heads together to create memorable lessons for their child.

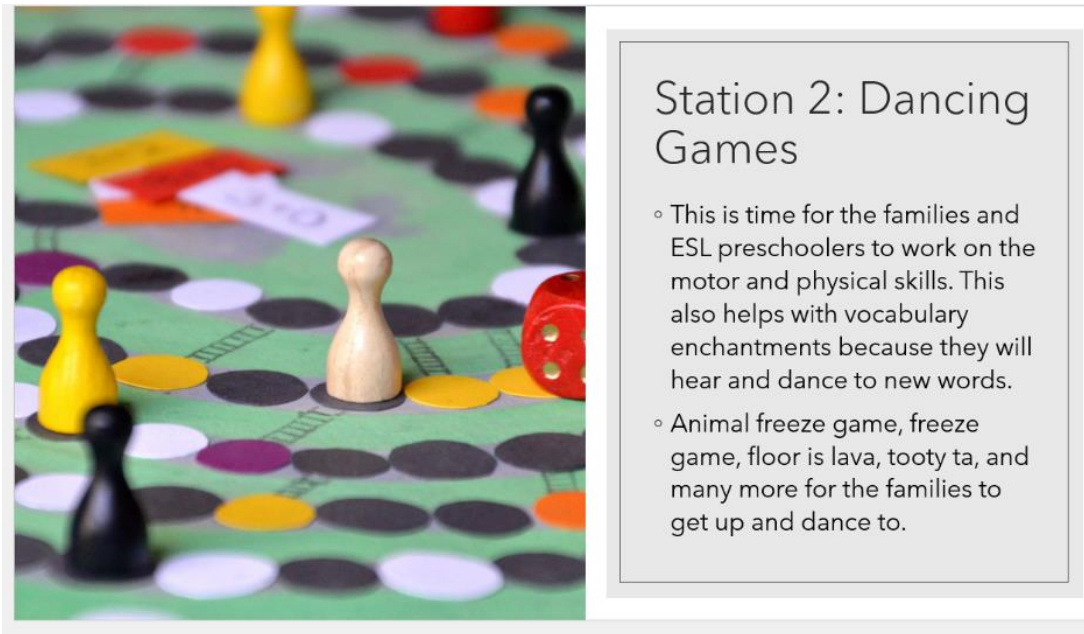


Figure 19

Station two will demonstrate dancing games that most preschoolers find enjoyable. This helps builds their motor and physical skills. With dancing games, ESL preschoolers build listening skills because the songs tell them exactly what to do. With the freeze game, it tells you when to freeze and when to continue dancing. The families will get to dance around with their children and watch them learn/understand new words and phrases.



Figure 20

Figure 20 demonstrates how the families should be spread out allowing everyone personal space to dance and move around.



Figure 21

Figure 21 represents how the families could dance together and how it should be laid out. This lay out still provides everyone with personal space and allows everyone to communicate with one another.



Figure 22

Figure 22 demonstrates how the families will pick their own cozy corner for the last reading aloud session. With this reading aloud session, the books will rely heavily on

illustrations. This will challenge the parents reading the book and allow the ESL preschoolers to practice their vocabulary words. With them creating their own cozy corner, it will allow the ESL preschoolers to get excited about reading and pick something cozy to sit on. This finishes the three day workshop that was packed full of developmental opportunities for ESL preschoolers. ESL preschoolers were able to have fun with sensory activities, read aloud for three hours total, play fun games that involved learning new sound patterns, and build a stronger bond with their families.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

With this project, I learned that ESL preschoolers have challenges to overcome other than learning a language. ESL preschoolers need basic development skills to build the foundation of how successful their outcome would be. If educators do not build early development skills in reading, writing, phonic, speaking, and vocabulary ESL preschoolers struggle immensely. I learned how to present these skills in the classroom without overwhelming the ESL preschoolers.

I have learned that sensory activities play a greater role in their development of young English learners. ESL preschoolers learn a lot by touching/feeling objects before they describe it. For ESL preschoolers to build vocabulary, they have to understand what something feels like. I have learned that reading is important because without it they struggle with academic success. Reading aloud to ESL preschoolers builds fluency skills which helps them with academic advancement. I learned that without fluency, ESL preschoolers struggle with constructing the meaning of new words. This project forced me to look outside my comfort zone and explore new ways to help advance ESL preschoolers.

With this project, I hoped to achieve a workshop to present in my future classroom. I wanted to design an effective workshop that could also be presented to my administration team. Additionally, I hoped to learn new ways to build early development skills through fun activities and to design strategies that were outside my comfort zone, that I had not been explored yet. I learned new activities that can be used in the classroom as well as new ways to challenge ESL preschoolers. I also created exercises that increase fun and support intelligence development. This project allowed me to branch out in my field and explore new ways to help my ESL preschoolers become successful in learning English.

I learned the importance of illustrations and how they impact an ESL preschooler's vocabulary. I also learned that reading aloud is an essential tool that ESL preschoolers need for early development. Circle time played an essential role in the development of this project, and thus, I came to see that through circle time ESL preschoolers need repetition in order for information to stick. I learned that ESL preschoolers needed character voices and demonstrations to grasp the information presented in the books.

With this project, further work is needed in areas of cognitive development. In chapter two, I learned that ESL preschoolers and circle time development is linked to their cognitive behavior. Further work is needed, and activities should be included for cognitive development in ESL preschoolers. Further investigation is also needed, and to understand differences between ESL preschoolers who had circle time and ones without. If this study was included, it might have further supported the importance of reading at an early age. This workshop needs to be tested with ESL preschoolers, families, and educators. I hope to see my product being used in authentic contexts. I hoped to see educators encouraging families and ESL preschoolers to use these activities to build these skills.

I hope that the project I created brings awareness to educators about how ESL preschoolers need early advancement skills to be successful in learning English. I hope that this project gives educators new ideas to try in their classrooms. More research is needed to determine how many ESL preschoolers benefit from having daily circle time and sensory activities added to their schedules. I hope that educators find my workshop interesting and a creative way to get ESL preschoolers excited about learning. Preschool is a difficult time for ESL students and building activities that bring out their personalities is what I hoped for.

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